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# The News&Observer

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# WakeMed expansion plan faces opposition from Rex

BY JOHN MURAWSKI
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RALEIGH

WakeMed's $60 million plan to expand its Cary hospital could stall or never happen if crosstown rival UNC Rex Healthcare has its way.

Rex contends that WakeMed Health & Hospitals is not serious about expanding but instead is trying to abuse the system to hurt competition. WakeMed's Cary expansion would likely have a lasting financial impact on Rex, which plans to open a 50-bed hospital in Holly Springs, 10 miles from WakeMed Cary.

In advance of a Dec. 14 public hearing, Rex is asking the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services to reject WakeMed's proposal to add two floors and 52 hospital beds in Cary.

"WakeMed's currently proposed project to develop additional acute care capacity should be viewed skeptically," Rex said in its written comments to the state. "UNC Rex believes there are several issues with WakeMed's application that indicate that the proposed project is not needed."

WakeMed has state approval to expand its flagship hospital in Raleigh. But the organization wants to transfer that permit to Cary, where it's proposing to expand from 156 beds to 208 beds. WakeMed officials say that since the Raleigh expansion was approved in 2014, Cary has experienced more growth.

WakeMed Cary's primary service areas – including Cary, Apex, Morrisville, Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs – have seen an 11.3 percent population increase from 2012 to 2016, according to the company. Hospital officials predict western Wake County will continue to grow substantially.

"We will continue to plan ahead for our patients and their families and advocate for projects that provide greater value, enhance community access to quality care and align with our mission," Tom Gough, senior vice president and administrator for WakeMed Cary Hospital, said in an emailed statement.

"We are committed to bringing needed, accessible health care resources closer to home; resources that will benefit residents, growing families and a

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HOMELESS COUNT

# Wake rise bucks state's trend

BY LYNN BONNER
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Homelessness in North Carolina declined in 2017, according to an annual count. Wake County, however, saw its homeless population increase.

The numbers come from a point-in-time count of homeless people around the state on one night in January and were announced Wednesday. Homelessness in the state declined 6.2 percent from 2016 to 2017, and is down more than 26 percent from 2010.

More homeless people were counted in Wake County this year, with the total increasing about 8 percent to 884.

The state also saw an uptick in homeless veterans, from 888 in 2016 to 931 in 2017. Terry Allebaugh, community impact coordinator with the N.C. Coalition to End Homelessness, said the increase comes from better counting.

"We're doing a better job at finding folks," he said.

The reasons for the overall increase in Wake will be familiar to anyone following ongoing discussions about the need for affordable housing. Wake grows by an average of 64 people per day, and housing in the county is becoming increasingly unaffordable for people with modest incomes.

Wake has done a lot in recent years to help homeless people find housing, said Shana Overdorf, executive director of the Raleigh/Wake County Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness. "Although our numbers have gone up, the work Wake is doing is incredible," she said.

Each state counts homeless people on one night in January. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports the nationwide snapshot on homelessness to Congress. The data are used by government agencies as a factor in distributing money for programs designed to help the homeless.

SEE HOMELESS, 5A

PHOTOS BY CHUCK LIDDY cliddy@newsobserver.com

## WINTRY WEATHER EXPECTED TO LINGER TODAY

Larry Townley, right, drags a freshly cut Christmas tree Friday with his wife, Janet, in Pineola. The Townleys hail from Charlotte and braved the first major snowfall of the season to grab their tree. Forecasters said heavy snow was falling Friday in the mountainous western part of the state. The National Weather Service said reports from observers indicated that more than 6 inches had fallen in parts of Buncombe County, which includes Asheville, and several other areas. To the east, snow fell in Greensboro and Durham. Parts of the Triangle – including Wake, Franklin, Vance and Warren counties – are under a winter weather advisory until 4 p.m. today, and Hillsborough and Chapel Hill are under a winter storm warning, according to the National Weather Service. Some of today's state high school football championships have been delayed 3 hours, the N.C. High School Athletic Association said.

Santa Claus waves to cars Friday along US 321 in Boone.

# Tillis calls for Senate inquiry into accusations against Moore

BY PAUL A. SPECHT
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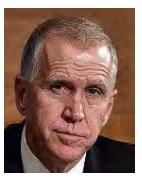
Add North Carolina's junior senator to the list of politicians who think the allegations of sexual misconduct against Roy Moore should be investigated.

Sen. Thom Tillis had previously called on Moore, who's running for a vacant Alabama Senate seat, to withdraw from the race. Moore is a former Alabama chief justice who is accused by several women of a range of misconduct, from inappropriate touching to sexual assault. Both Tillis and Moore are Republicans.



Thom Tillis

Moore has denied the allegations and is staying in the race.

On Thursday, Tillis echoed Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in saying the Senate should investigate Moore if he's elected.

"I think we have to first move with an ethics investigation. We need to examine the facts and let those facts lead us where they may," he told BuzzFeed's AM to DM show.

Among North Carolina Republicans, Tillis has been Moore's most vocal critic. Sen. Richard Burr also called for

SEE TILLIS, 7A

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